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LEADERSHIP TRAITS OF AN EFFECTIVE
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

A Field Project
Presented to the
Department of Educational Administration
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

by
Margaret Ann Corkle

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Due to the perplexing problems facing education in the United States today there is a great need for capable leaders on the national, state, and local level. Education is one of the most important businesses in the country today. Over 60 million children attend school at an annual cost of \$95 billion dollars to the taxpayers.¹ With the expansion of educational services and the tremendous increase in public school attendance, the task of the school administrator has become more difficult and complex.

The school administrator of today is vastly more than a "manager". He is a kind of human engineer, a recognized participant and a leader of planning for the educational community. He is often a catalytic agent, initiating and facilitating community action. "Leadership of the school systems of today and tomorrow demands a strong, well balanced personality, sound professional preparation and solid experience in education."²

¹"The High Cost of Schooling - Is It Worth the Price?", U. S. News and World Report, (September 3, 1973), p. 28.

²Natt B. Burbank, The Superintendent of Schools - His Headaches and Rewards (Danville, Illinois: Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1968), p. 117.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the goal of this study to identify the leadership traits of individuals who are believed to be successful educational administrators or who people feel have the capability of being successful educational administrators. It is felt that if these specific traits could be identified in an individual, this information could be one factor used in the selection of future educational leaders.

Examples of leadership traits to be studied include the following, empathy, enthusiasm, integrity, and loyalty.

Importance of the study. If we are to cope with the problems of providing competent educational leadership, it is necessary to accurately determine how to identify individuals who have the potential of being effective leaders.

Delimitations. The traits necessary to be a capable leader apply to all areas of education but this study will be limited to a local educational leader, the public school superintendent. It is realized that an effective school superintendent needs other capabilities besides leadership skills and traits to have an impact on education but this is the only attribute which was selected to be studied in this paper.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Administrator. An administrator is one who directs or executes the affairs of a public school district.

Characteristics. Characteristics are the particular or distinctive qualities of an individual which distinguishes him from another.

Leadership. Leadership is the initiation of a new structure or procedure for accomplishing organizational goals or objectives or for changing the organizational goals or objectives.³ "Leadership is an ability to persuade or direct men without use of the prestige or power of formal office or external circumstance."⁴

Trait. A trait is a distinguishing quality of character, mind, and etc. It is a characteristic or peculiarity.

III. THE PROCEDURE

The following procedure will be used to obtain information on the identification of leadership traits of educational administrators. (1) A review will be made of related

³James Heald and Samuel Moore, The Teacher and Administrative Relationships in School Systems (New York: The Macmillin Company, 1968), p. 120.

⁴Fred E. Fiedler, A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), p. 7.

literature in the area of leadership identification in education as well as in business and industry. (2) Personal interviews will be used to obtain business and educational leader's views on methods used to identify future potential leaders. (3) A questionnaire will be used to obtain the views of teachers, principals and school board members on leadership abilities they feel are needed to be an effective school superintendent. Those selected to receive a questionnaire will be located throughout the state of Nebraska and they will be affiliated with large, medium size, and small school systems. The questionnaire will list traits that have been identified through interviews and reading of related literature. Those individuals answering the questionnaire will be asked to add any two traits they wish to the compiled list and then select the ten traits they feel are the most important listed.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter one of the study includes an introduction, a statement of the problem, a brief summary of the need of the study, delimitations of the study, a definition of terms used, procedure to be followed, and the pattern of organization of the study.

Chapter two presents a review of the literature pertaining to leadership in general, leadership responsibility

of a school superintendent, and leadership traits.

Chapter three is devoted to describing the method and procedure of the study. Chapter four details the findings of the study and an analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

Chapter five presents the summary and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is no consensus among those who make up the school public or even among educators themselves as to what constitutes educational leadership. "Since a concept of leadership is an abstraction involving ideals and ethics and existing in the minds of men, concepts of educational leadership means different things to different persons."¹

The review of related literature was subdivided into the following areas: general information on leadership, educational leadership and leadership traits.

I. LITERATURE ON LEADERSHIP

Historically the study of leadership has followed three fundamental approaches. In the first approach it was felt every leader had some common trait or traits which enabled him to function successfully as a leader.² (More information on this topic will be presented later in the chapter.)

¹James Monroe Hughes, Human Relations in Educational Organizations (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1957), p. 140.

²Garnar Walsh, "Whats the Secret of Leadership?" College and University Business, July, 1970, p. 37.

"The second approach used by researchers is referred to as "Zeitgeist" or times makes the man approach. It became popular in the 30's and 40's when world leaders such as Adolph Hitler, B. Mussolini, and Joseph Stalin rose from obscurity to positions of great power. Today a person who adheres to the Zeitgeist approach is called a "popo" (passed over, plenty often) by Professor Brooks of Cornell University. The popo uses many excuses to explain why he never attained his goal in life."³

The trait approach and the Zeitgeist approach still have their supporters. "The third and most recent approach, called 'trait situation', concerns itself with the study of the traits of leaders in a specific situation. Supporters of this theory argue that leadership is a varying combination of factors and or traits."⁴

Harold Moore included in his book the following definitions of leadership: "The term leadership describes a relationship between persons, it refers to interplay among persons. This relation results in one person having for a time the major responsibility for the activities and the welfare of the group. Leadership is displayed when one person affects another person or a group of persons in such

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

a way that common direction is given to their effort through this one person. Leadership is always accomplished in relation to others, never alone."⁵

"Leadership can be described as a process of influence on a group in a particular situation, at a given point in time, and in a specific set of circumstances that stimulates people to strive willingly to attain organizational objectives, giving them experience of helping attain the common objectives and satisfaction with the type of leadership provided."⁶

Leadership is (1) the ability and readiness to inspire, guide, direct, or manage others; (2) the role of interpreter of the interests and objectives of a group, the group recognizing and accepting the interpreter as spokesman.⁷

The view of leadership varies to a degree between educational researchers and business and industrial researchers, In the Art of Top Management the author indicated "Leadership releases energy in the rank and file by means of personal impact. A leader's successful style becomes the complete

⁵Harold E. Moore, The Administrator of Public School Personnel (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1966), p. 17.

⁶James J. Cribbin, Effective Managerial Leadership (New York: American Management Association, Inc., 1972), p. 9.

⁷R. Oliver Gibson and Harold C. Hunt, The School Personnel Administrator (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1965), p. 212.

expression of the man, giving strength and enthusiasm to his subordinates and reinforcing their desire to do well."⁸

Business is concerned about the selection of effective leaders. In personal interviews in October, 1973, with Mr. Tim Rouse, Personnel Department, Union Pacific Company, and Mr. John Harting, Personnel Department, Northern Natural Gas Company, it was indicated that a great effort is made to select the right individuals for executive training programs. They desire an individual that will provide the leadership needed by their organizations in the future. Each organization has developed its own specific method in accomplishing this task.

Jay Jackson felt that theorizing about leadership had undergone a significant change and that leadership was then defined as a function which was required when individuals were coordinating their efforts toward a common goal.⁹

A definition of leadership given in 1935 by Ordway Tead would be very unacceptable to many researchers in leadership today. "Leadership is the activity of influencing people to cooperate toward some goal which they come to find desirable."¹⁰

⁸Roland Mann, Ed., The Art of Top Management (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971), p. 41.

⁹Jay Jackson, "The Effect of Changing the Leadership of Small Work Groups," Human Relations, January, 1953, p. 25.

¹⁰James Monroe Hughes, Human Relations in Education Organizations (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1957), p. 153.

Leadership is the exercise of authority and the making of decisions. Leadership is the initiation of acts which result in a consistent pattern of group interactions directed toward the solution of a mutual problem. Leadership is the process of influencing group activities toward goal setting and goal achievement.¹¹

The leader is the man who comes nearest to realizing the norms the group values highest, this conformity gives him his high rank, which attracts people and implies the right to assume control of the group. The leader is one who initiates and facilitates member interaction.

We shall define a leader as the individual in the group given the task of directing and coordinating task-relevant group activities or who, in the absences of a designated leader, carries the primary responsibility for performing these functions in the group.¹²

Leadership is not a new concept. In 604 B.C. a Chinese philosopher, Lao-Tzu gave his definition of a leader.

"A leader is best
When people barely know that he exists
Not so good when people obey and acclaim him
Worse when they despise him.

¹¹Fred E. Fiedler, A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), pp. 7-8.

¹²Ibid. p. 8.

But of a good leader who talks little
 When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,
 They will all say
 We did this ourselves."¹³

Lao-Tzu is also credited with writing, "To lead people, Walk behind them" and "True leadership must be for the benefit of the followers, not the enrichment of the leaders".¹⁴

"As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. The next best, the people honor and praise. The next, the people fear; the next, the people hate. When the best leader's work is done the people say, "We did it ourselves'".¹⁵

According to George Mackenzie and Stephen McCorey, "A recognized leader is a person who is seen by individuals or groups as helping or being able to help provide the means they desire to use to identify or attain their goals."¹⁶

Leadership places a great responsibility upon the leader. A few rules of leadership have been developed by a Mr. Hosmans. They include: the leader will not give orders that he knows will not be obeyed; he will listen and he will live up to the norms of his group. Researchers found that a

¹³Bynner Witter, The Way of Life According to Lao-Tzu (New York: The John Day Company, 1944), p. 34.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid. p. 81.

¹⁶Cribbin, op. cit., p. 85.

leader conforms more closely to norms than does any other member of the group.¹⁷

Perceptual psychology is important in relation to leadership because it attempts to develop in the individual a sensitivity toward others. However, before a person can become an effective leader he must know himself.¹⁸

A great deal has been written about leadership and there is a wide range of views on the topic but the following definition seems to express it best. "Leadership is the ability to create group action toward an organizational objective with maximum effectiveness and cooperation from each individual."¹⁹

II. LITERATURE ON EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Mr. Gustafson warns that unless school managers provide leadership and support, needed changes and reforms will be short lived.

¹⁷Garner Walsh, "Small Group Structures Provide Clue to Leadership," College and University Business, August, 1970, p. 47.

¹⁸Garner Walsh, "Group Is More Than Sum of Its Self-Concepts," College and University Business, September, 1970 p. 80.

¹⁹G. A. Freeman and E. K. Taylor, How to Pick Leaders A Scientific Approach to Executive Selection (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1950), p. 40.

In a recent appraisal of its school reform projects of the 1960's A Foundation Goes to School, the Ford Foundation reports, "The success or failure of a project was determined more by the performance and continued service of the project director than any other single factor."²⁰

Where is the administrator when the staff needs leadership? "Some of them automatically 'tune out' a problem, says Charles Blaschke, president of Educational Turnkey Systems, Inc., a leading educational consulting firm. But most school administrators either disavow their role in managerial decision-making - 'The board does that, we only administer - or say something like, 'The problem is being studied.'"²¹

"As innovations occur in schools, enlightened leadership is necessary for the task of clarifying, modifying and replacing goals and values."²² Leadership of the school system of today and tomorrow demands a strong, well balanced personality, sound professional preparation and solid experience in education service.²³

²⁰"Administrator and Staff Leadership," School Management, April, 1973, p. 14.

²¹Ibid.

²²Harold J. Lipman, "Instructional Leader or Administrator Robot," National Association of Secondary School Principals, April, 1972, p. 20.

²³Natt B. Burbank, The Superintendent of Schools - His Headaches and Rewards (Danville, Illinois: Interstate Printer and Publishers, 1968), p. 117.

"All school administrators in general and to some degree perform leadership functions. They are all executives, participating more or less in planning and policy making, serving as educational experts for the board and in the community, officially representing the personnel and influencing interrelationships among the personnel."²⁴

The public school administrator is no longer thought of merely as a superintendent of instruction or even of schools if this is narrowly conceived. Rather, he is attaining recognition as the leader of educational life in his community.²⁵

The school leader must be an educational strategist and architect. He must be capable of conducting research not in the traditional sense, but must have skills and mechanisms to ferret out the subtle concerns of his clientel, the people of his school district.²⁶

Not all people in education would agree with R. A. McCoy's statement that, "Educational leaders should be personally secure enough to utilize his skills in manipulation.

²⁴James Monroe Hughes, op. cit., p. 135.

²⁵Robert Elmer Sternloff, "The Critical Requirements for School Administrators Based Upon An Analysis of Critical Incidents" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1953), p. 2.

²⁶R. A. McCoy, "Ingredients of Leadership," Educational Leadership, May, 1972, p. 273.

The school board for example must be made conscious of its particular role and be open to leadership by the superintendent, that is, manipulated in a sophisticated manner to encompass their interests and dignity."²⁷

The educational leader of the future must be competent in the following areas:

1. educational leader of the future should be competent in community leadership as it concerns the development of basic educational policy and program
2. the educational executive of the future should be highly competent as a leader in developing the content, experience, and methods which compass the needed instructional program of the school and other educational agencies of the community
3. the educational executive of the future should be highly competent in selecting, organizing and leading the school staff of the community
4. the educational executive must be competent in the philosophy and procedures of democratic leadership
5. the educational leader of the future should be highly competent in making the case for necessary facilities of education.²⁸

"The new emerging role of the superintendent requires him to be able to adjust his operations and techniques to meet the new patterns of problems, an administrator must be creative at seeking solutions. Our rapid sociological change calls for fresh, creative, innovative education leadership. No longer is the experience of 'going through the chairs' (the prerequisite of employment as a teacher, principal,

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Sternloff, op. cit., p. 18.

assistant superintendent, superintendent) considered as important.²⁹

Thomas J. Sergiovani and Fred D. Carver, in their book, The New School Executive - A Theory of Administration, state that leadership functions may be thought of as necessary events in the course of a group's movement from one task or set of tasks to another task or set of tasks. "While the school executive who is the 'leader' of a particular group has responsibility for ensuring that these functions occur, we do not conceive of him directly performing them. The functions are:

1. Making the group aware of the need for new or different action - awareness.
2. Clarifying alternative ends and strategies - settling on action.
3. Accepting and initiating a preferred end or approach - implementing.
4. Monitoring of progress toward the preferred end or approach - processing.
5. Introducing evaluative data - evaluating.
6. Concluding group activity on the particular end or approach - concluding.
7. Making the group aware of its result - feedback.³⁰

In the article, "The School Board Today", Dr. M. McGhehy assigns the failures of the American public school system to

²⁹Frank C. Mayer and Harold E. Wilson, The Effective Superintendent (Midland, Michigan: Pendell Publishing Company 1972), p. 4.

³⁰Thomas J. Sergiovani and Fred D. Carver, The New School Executive - A Theory of Administration (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1973), p. 207.

six factors. Number two was, "Many superintendents are completely inept and unable to provide leadership."³¹

"While the school executive who would lead must have subleaders and a receptive group, he cannot escape the spotlight. His subordinates expect him to acknowledge his key responsibility through the example of his own behavior. It is not that he must determine appropriate behavioral style for all leaders in his school organization. Neither should he expect that only he can perform the more prestigious leadership acts. His failure, however, to direct and coordinate group activities necessary to achieve and change goals - regardless of his distance from the activity and the level at which he performs the acts - is an abdication of the leadership responsibility."³²

III. LITERATURE ON LEADERSHIP TRAITS

Leadership has been defined as an interpersonal relationship in which power and influence are unevenly distributed so that one person is able to direct and control the actions and behaviors of others to a greater extent than they direct and control his. In this type of relationship between

³¹"The School Board Today," Nebraska School Board Association Bulletin, March, 1973, p. 10.

³²Sergiovani and Carver, op. cit., p. 198.

the leader and his members the personality of the leader is likely to determine to a large extent the degree to which he can influence the behavior of the group.³³

Authors on the subject of leadership vary in their views of what traits or characteristics are found in the personality of a successful leader.

In the article "The Administrator and Staff Leadership," the author emphasized the quality of flexibility. "Flexible leaders create and sustain effective learning programs. Flexible means willing to listen to subordinates and community, and willing to delegate considerable decision-making authority to principals and school staff."³⁴

In his book The Human Group, George Homans analyzed the relationship between leadership and small groups. Homans formulated a number of rules of leadership, one of which is "The leader will listen". "Listening takes courage because it is not easy to listen while other talk. Psychologist say that listening deflates the ego and lessens the self-concept, which is why people vie with one another for attention."³⁵

³³Fiedler, op. cit., p. 11.

³⁴"The Administration and Staff Leadership," School Management, April, 1973, p. 14.

³⁵Garnar Walsh, "Leader Must Respond to Feeling and Content," College and University Business, October, 1970, p. 62.

Woodrow Wilson identified sympathy as the first requisite of leadership, but he equated sympathy with insight. He stated "Successful leadership is a product of sympathy, not antagonism," "By this he meant that the leader must be able to understand the feelings, attitudes, and problems of the people he would lead."³⁶

Doll felt leadership could be had if the leader possessed certain traits. Among the traits considered most significant according to numerous trait studies are the following:

1. Empathy: ability to respond to and identify with emotional needs of the members of one's group
2. Surgency: enthusiasm, alertness, geniality, expressiveness, and cheerfulness
3. Recognition by the group: tendency to conform to the group's "critical norms," and therefore not to be regarded as odd or markedly different from the people one leads
4. Helpfulness: willingness and ability to help the people
5. Emotional control: serenity and poise exhibited in emergencies
6. Intelligence: ability to respond to real situations with acumen and sensitivity
7. Interest: genuine commitment to and concern for the projects undertaken by the group.

"A problem with even the most carefully selected traits is that they are not necessarily universal. Apparently the degree of significance assigned to each of the traits

³⁶Daniel Griffiths, Human Relations in School Administration (New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, Inc., 1956), p. 247.

in a given list may vary from situation to situation." Doll found in his studies that capable leaders showed self-confidence, alertness, job motivation, and aggressiveness.³⁷

"A leader is actually a rare bird and it is no simple matter to recognize one. The recognition of him depends on many factors. What he does and what characteristics he displays have to be appraised in the light of economic and social progress and of his own objectives and motives, things seldom seen by his contemporaries."³⁸

"The Fourth Report of the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration," presented a list of musts for an administrator. "He must be widely informed in current events. He must have exceptional competence in speaking, in writing, in listening, and in interview techniques and in all communication media."³⁹

A committee questioned 503 lay people and school employees regarding traits desired in their next superintendent. The query disclosed the following traits referred to in the following frequency: Character 413, Business ability 391,

³⁷Ronald C. Doll, Leadership to Improve Schools (Worthington, Ohio: Charles Jones Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 16-17.

³⁸Gibson and Hunt, op. cit., p. 218.

³⁹Ibid.

Administrative or executive ability 383, Personality 378, Educational leadership 361, Sociability 291, Speaker 201, Culture 158, Writer 96, Married and children 84, Religion 47.⁴⁰

Griffiths found that teachers' rating of administrators indicated they placed most stress on three items.

"(1) He displays initiative. (2) He presents well organized plans. (3) He is a very hard worker."⁴¹

"Investigations have proved that certain personality variables do differentiate between leaders and non-leaders - intelligence, self confidence, sociability, will (initiative, persistence, ambition), and dominance."⁴²

In a clinical study of 100 business executives extensive personal data were obtained. Analysis of the data attempted to identify a personality pattern which was common to all successful executives. The attributes of the successful executive were discovered to be the following:

1. High drive and achievement desire
2. Strong mobility drives, a need to advance and to accumulate
3. A perception of superiors as controlling but helpful; not as prohibiting and destructive
4. High ability to organize unstructure situations and to see the implication of their organization

⁴⁰Sternloff, op. cit., p. 17.

⁴¹Griffiths, op. cit., p. 244.

⁴²B. VanHaller Gilmer, Industrial Psychology (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961), p. 182.

5. Decisiveness - the ability to come to a decision among several alternative courses of action
6. Strong self-structure (they are able to resist pressure from other people and have faith in themselves)
7. Active, aggressive, striving
8. Apprehension and fear of failing
9. A strong reality orientation (they are directly interested in the practical, immediate, and the direct)
10. Identification with superiors and detachment from subordinates
11. Emotional independence from parents but not resentment toward them.⁴³

In an announcement of a vacancy folder distributed by the Port Jefferson School District of New York it was stated that the successful candidate for the Port Jefferson District chief administrator position should:

Be above all, an educational leader with a constant concern for educational progress
 Be accessible to staff, students, and community
 Be a communicator and a listener
 Have a high ethical standard
 Have compassion, a sense of humor, vigor, and stamina.⁴⁴

"A great many research studies have been completed on the qualifications necessary for success in the superintendency. Generally speaking, the following factors seems to be among the most important: (1) ability to see the whole

⁴³Gilmer, op. cit., p. 180.

⁴⁴Port Jefferson School District, "Announcement of Vacancy - Chief School District Administrator" (Port Jefferson, New York, December, 1973), p. 4.

picture, (2) unusual understanding of people, and (3) unusual ability to live with a high-pressure job.⁴⁵

Spirit, courage, vision, and commitment are also part of the attributes a great superintendent must have in this day and age. He must cope with the myriad of force that affect the schools in this society of ours.⁴⁶

An examination survey of some 124 studies on leadership was made by Stogdill. He concluded that a classification of personal actors associated with leadership could be:

Capacity (intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality, judgement)
 Achievement (scholarship, knowledge, athletic accomplishments)
 Responsibility (activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability, humor)
 Statues (socio-economic position, popularity)
 Situation (mental level, status, skills, needs).⁴⁷

From careful study of many leaders, experts would come close to agreeing that the best and most successful leaders exhibit many or all of the following:

1. Energy, enthusiasm
2. Confidence
3. Sense of purpose and direction

⁴⁵American Association of School Administrators and National School Board Association, Selecting a School Superintendent (Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators, 1968), p. 7.

⁴⁶American Association of School Administrators, op. cit., p. 3.

⁴⁷Roger Bellows, Creative Leadership (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 293

4. Technical skill
5. Imagination and ability to face reality
6. Traits of personality
 - a. Modesty, combined with self-promotion
 - b. Friendliness, affection
 - c. Social ease and grace
 - d. Lack of snobbishness
 - e. Tact
 - f. Frankness and honesty
 - g. Sense of humor
7. Traits of character
 - a. Adaptability
 - b. Integrity
 - c. Fairness and impartiality
 - d. Courage
 - e. Initiative
 - f. Thoroughness
8. Intelligence - curiosity, observation, open-mindedness, resourcefulness and originality
9. Judgement
10. Faith.⁴⁸

Speaking roughly, in leadership, personality factors are probably ten times as important as all aptitude and proficiency factors combined; yet they are relatively unknown scientific qualities. Psychologists suspect that personality can be broken down into four or five areas of difference.

1. An energy-drive factor
2. A social adaptiveness factor
3. An emotional-control factor
4. An ethical factor - 'conscience for short'.⁴⁹

Listed on the next page are trait terms used to differentiate leaders from non-leaders.

⁴⁸Glen F. Ovard, Changes and Secondary School Administration (New York: The Macmillin Company, 1968), p. 62.

⁴⁹Freeman and Taylor, op. cit., p. 18.

Industry	Efficient, competent
Integrity	Clarity of mind
Energy	Foresighted
Courage	Analytical
Ambition	Capacity for hard work
Initiative	Patient, self-confident
Resourceful	Poised and polished
Perseverance	Sincerity
Composure	Optimistic
Tactful	Progressive
Cooperative	Forceful ⁵⁰

Interpersonal perception is based on the assumption that the way in which one person perceives another will affect his relations with him. Thus whether or not the other is in fact intelligent, friendly, cooperative, and helpful may be relatively unimportant to the relationship as long as he is perceived in this manner.⁵¹

Not all writers feel that personality traits are a factor in the study of leadership.

According to Haiman the qualities, characteristics, and skills required in a leader are determined to a large extent by the demands of the situation in which he is to function as a leader. "A person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits, but the pattern of personal characteristics must bear some relevant relationship to the characteristics, activities,

⁵⁰Freeman and Taylor, op. cit., p. 38.

⁵¹Fiedler, op. cit., p. 40.

and goals of the followers. Thus leadership must be conceived in terms of the interaction of variables which are in constant flux and change."⁵²

Gilmer felt efforts to predict human behavior had been dominated by an emphasis on traits and abilities, something of a carry-over from the beginning days of industrial psychology.⁵³

According to Doll long-enduring popular impressions which have no foundation in fact continue to influence the choice of leaders for many an enterprise. "However, we do not know the relative importance of different traits, nor do we know whether a given trait is more essential for gaining a leadership position than it is for holding one. In short more than one hundred trait studies have yielded little understanding on which one can rely."

"A second theory states that social situations determine the nature and equality of leadership needed to deal with them. According to this theory, leadership which succeeds in one situation will not necessarily do so in another."⁵⁴

⁵²Franklin Haiman, Group Leadership and Democratic Action (New York: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1951), p. 10.

⁵³Gilmer, op. cit., p. 181.

⁵⁴Doll, op. cit., p. 11.

"Personality factors were examined by writers on leadership; aggressiveness versus submissiveness, extroversion versus introversion, and researchers gradually began to believe that the personality characteristics of leadership were too complex to measure with standard psychological tests."⁵⁵

The author, David Lawless, stated that books written before 1950 on the topic of leadership were for historical interest only.⁵⁶

The term leadership has a variety of meanings and thus makes it difficult to identify and study. Most authors agree there is a need for educational leadership, but not all agreed on how this should be accomplished.

The authors on leadership disagreed on the importance of traits and characteristics of an individual in the study of a leader.

⁵⁵David J. Lawless, Effective Management, School Psychological Approach (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p. 302.

⁵⁶Ibid.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study was designed to obtain the views of teachers, principals, and school board members as to what traits or characteristics they felt were important for an individual to possess to be an effective school superintendent.

I. SELECTION OF THE POPULATION

The names of the individuals selected to receive the questionnaire were obtained from the Nebraska Educational Directory. Those individuals were selected arbitrarily to represent various school districts throughout the state of Nebraska. An effort was made to obtain individuals from small, average, and large school districts; districts in the eastern, central, and western part of the state; elementary, junior high and senior high school teachers, and principals. An effort was also made to obtain equal representation between male and female participants.

Twenty-five teachers, twenty-five principals, and twenty-five school board members were selected to receive the questionnaire. Each group was tabulated separately.

II. PROCEDURE

The initial step in the investigation was a review of the literature on leadership so as to identify specific traits or characteristics of an effective leader. Appointments were made with personnel representatives of two large businesses in Omaha, Union Pacific and Northern Natural Gas. This was done to enable a comparison between views of leadership held by business and educational leaders. The gentlemen were specifically asked what leadership traits they felt an individual should possess to be considered for an executive training program.

From the information obtained through reading of related literature and personal interviews a questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire listed eighteen pre-selected leadership traits or characteristics. The participants were able to add two traits to this list if they wished.

The questionnaire was mailed to the participants in November, 1973. A stamped self-addressed envelope was provided for their convenience.

A copy of the questionnaire used appears in the Appendix.

III. TREATMENT OF THE DATA

The data obtained from the questionnaire return was

tabulated and analyzed. The information was classified according to teacher responses, principals responses, and school board members responses.

The results of these analyses are presented in Chapter IV by the use of tables and graphs.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter was to present and analyze the data obtained from the questionnaires sent to teachers, principals, and school board members.

II. PRESENTATION OF DATA

Twenty-five questionnaires were sent to teachers in the state of Nebraska and eighteen or seventy-two per cent were returned. Of the twenty-five questionnaires sent to principals, twenty-two or eighty-eight per cent were returned. Seventeen or sixty-eight per cent of the twenty-five questionnaires sent to school board members were returned.

The participants were to select the ten leadership traits or characteristics they felt were most important for an effective school superintendent to possess.

The information obtained from the questionnaires is presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

TABLE 1
LEADERSHIP TRAITS SELECTED BY TEACHERS

Number	Per cent	Trait
3	16.7	Achievement drive
13	72.2	Adaptable
4	22.2	Aggressive
18	100.0	Alertness to problems
14	77.8	Communication skills
8	44.4	Cooperative
5	27.8	Courteous
4	22.2	Creative
18	100.0	Decision-making skills
13	72.2	Dependable
12	66.7	Emotional control
3	16.7	Empathy
9	50.0	Enthusiasm
12	66.7	Integrity
7	38.7	Loyalty
13	72.2	Progressive
11	61.1	Resourceful
5	27.8	Sincerity
2	11.1	Risk taker

TABLE 2
LEADERSHIP TRAITS SELECTED BY PRINCIPALS

Number	Per cent	Trait
7	31.8	Achievement drive
16	72.7	Adaptable
1	4.5	Aggressive
20	90.9	Alertness to problems
18	81.8	Communication skills
10	45.5	Cooperative
2	9.0	Courteous
9	40.9	Creative
22	100.0	Decision-making skills
14	63.6	Dependable
13	59.1	Emotional Control
13	59.1	Empathy
9	40.9	Enthusiasm
18	81.8	Integrity
4	18.2	Loyalty
9	40.9	Progressive
14	63.6	Resourceful
11	50.0	Sincerity
1	4.5	Friendly

TABLE 3
LEADERSHIP TRAITS SELECTED BY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Number	Per cent	Trait
4	23.5	Achievement drive
10	58.8	Adaptable
2	11.8	Aggressive
14	82.4	Alertness to problems
14	82.4	Communication skills
14	82.4	Cooperative
9	52.9	Courteous
2	11.8	Creative
15	82.2	Decision-making skills
12	70.6	Dependable
11	64.7	Emotional control
3	17.6	Empathy
8	47.1	Enthusiasm
12	70.6	Integrity
11	64.7	Loyalty
8	47.1	Progressive
7	41.2	Resourceful
8	47.1	Sincerity

The questionnaire return showed there was a degree of consistency among the three groups on the selection of leadership traits of an effective school superintendent. This information is illustrated in Figure 1.

Decision-making was selected the most often by all three groups; eighteen or one hundred per cent of the teachers, twenty-one or one hundred per cent of the principals, and fifteen or eighty-eight per cent of the school board members.

The second leadership trait selected most often by all groups was alertness to problems; eighteen or one hundred per cent of the teachers and twenty or ninety per cent of the principals. School board members ranked three traits equally for second, third, and fourth place. They were, alertness to problems, communication skills, and cooperative. Each trait was selected by fourteen or eighty-two per cent of the school board members responding to the questionnaire.

Fourteen or about seventy-nine per cent of the teachers selected communication skills and thirteen or seventy-two per cent of the teachers selected progressiveness. The teachers ranked communication skills third and progressiveness fourth. Principals ranked communication skills third and integrity fourth. Eighteen or approximately eighty-two per cent of the principals selected communication skills and integrity.

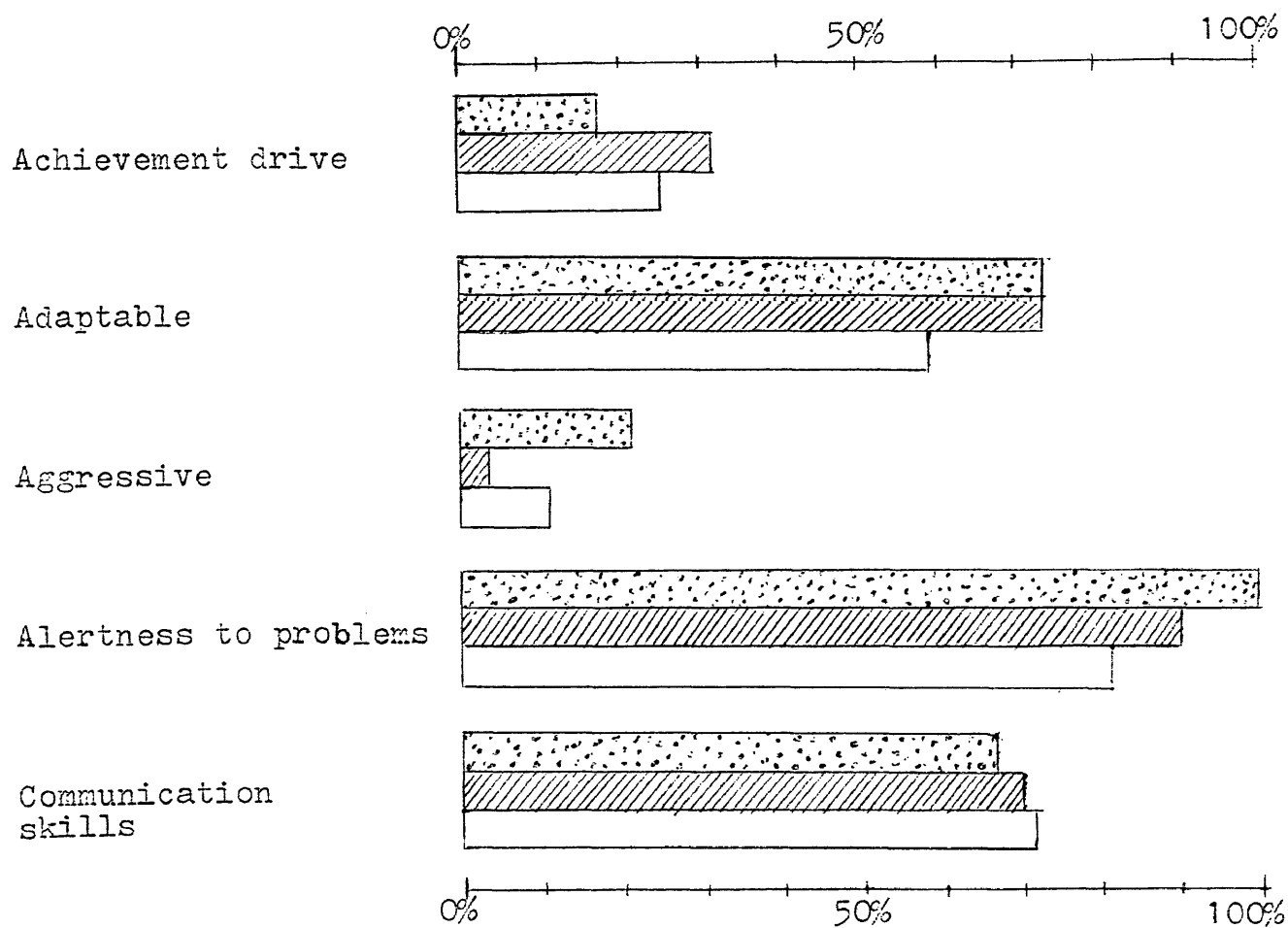





FIGURE 1

LEADERSHIP TRAITS SELECTED BY
TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, and SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

TEACHERS	
PRINCIPALS	
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS	

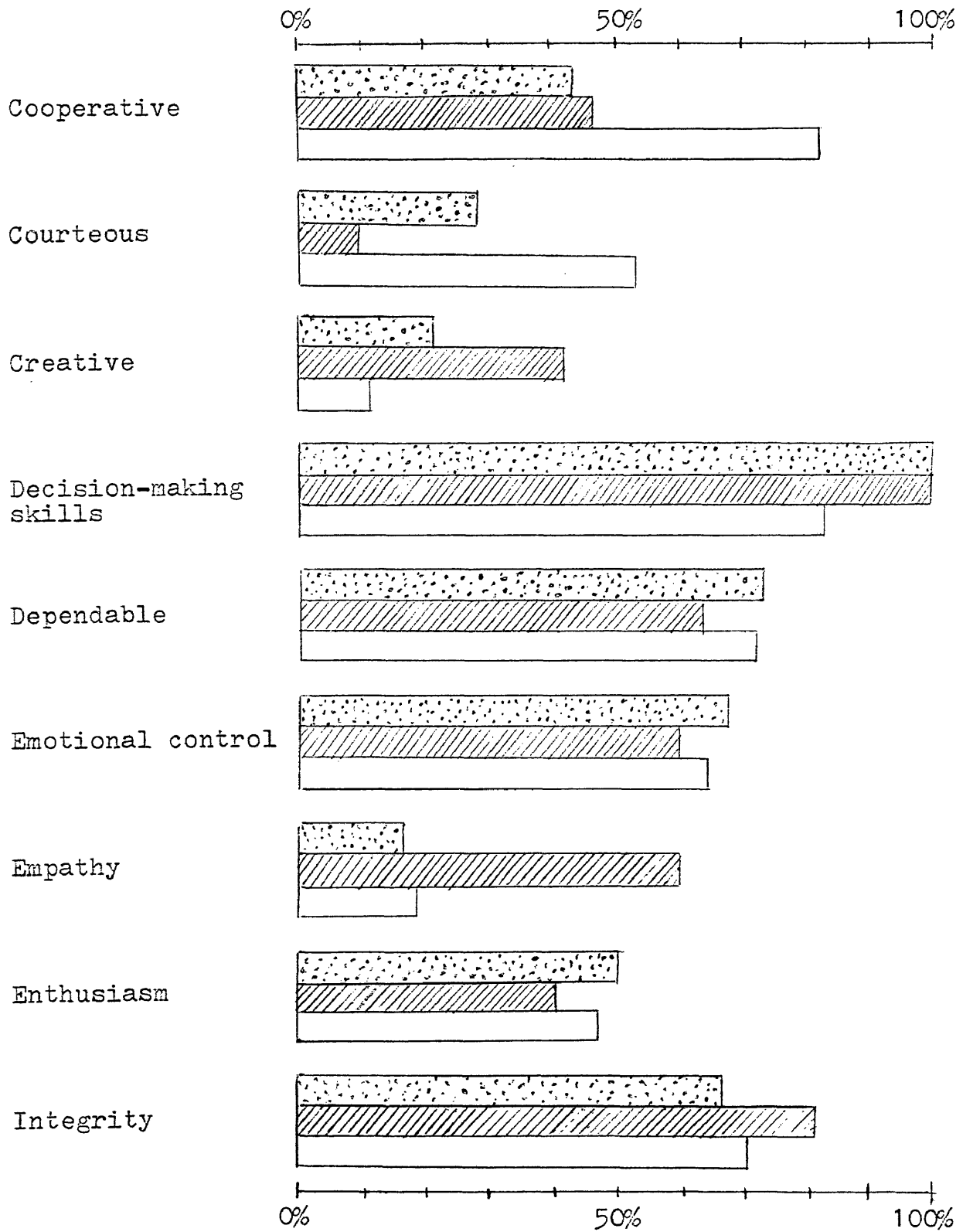


FIGURE 1 (continued)

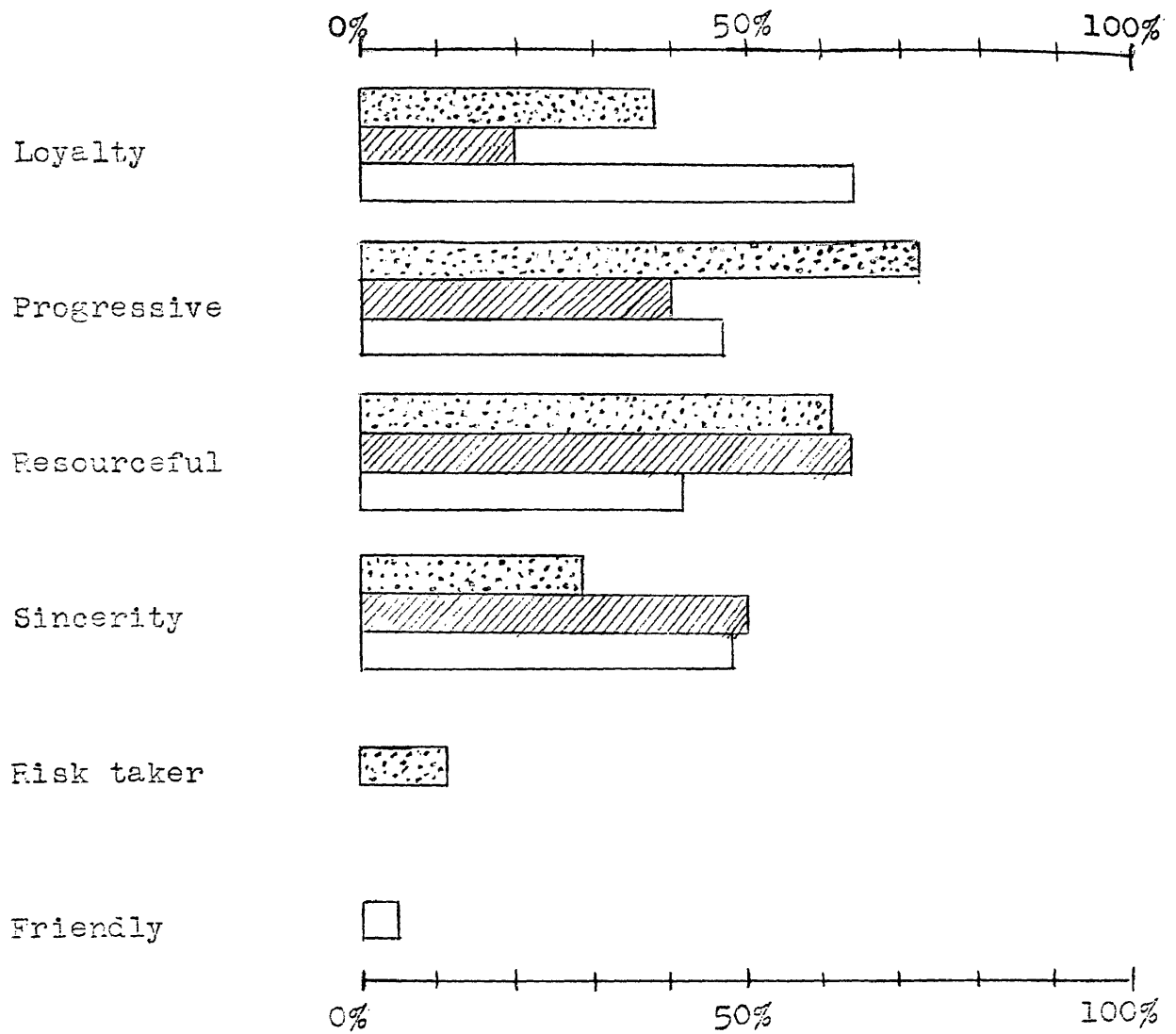


FIGURE 1 (continued)

The greatest disagreement among the three groups was found over the leadership traits of cooperativeness, courtesy, empathy, and loyalty. Eight or forty-four per cent of the teachers selected cooperative and ten or forty-five and a half per cent of the principals selected cooperative. But fourteen or eighty-two per cent of the school board members selected cooperative.

There was great disagreement in the selection of courtesy as a leadership trait. Five or approximately twenty-eight per cent of the teachers, two or nine per cent of the principals, and nine or approximately fifty-three per cent of the school board members selected courtesy.

Empathy was selected by three or sixteen per cent of the teachers and thirteen or fifty-nine per cent of the principals. Only three or seventeen per cent of the school board members selected empathy.

Seven or thirty-eight per cent of the teachers and four or eighteen per cent of the principals selected loyalty. Eleven or approximately sixty-five per cent of the school board members selected loyalty. This is difficult to analyze because the question could possibly be interpreted as loyalty to the school district, to the school board, or loyalty to the school staff.

The participants were requested to add two leadership traits to the list if they desired. Two teachers added risk

taking and a school board member added friendly.

Of all the traits listed on the questionnaire, the least valued one was aggressiveness.

Tables 4, 5, and 6 show the ranking of the traits selected by the three individual groups; teachers, principals, and school board members. The traits selected most often in each group are listed first in the tables and the listing progresses to those selected the fewest times.

TABLE 4
TRAITS SELECTED BY TEACHERS
RANKED IN ORDER OF SELECTION

Number	Trait
18	Alertness to problems
18	Decision-making
14	Communication skills
13	Adaptable
13	Dependable
13	Progressive
12	Emotional control
12	Integrity
11	Resourceful
9	Enthusiasm
8	Cooperative
7	Loyalty
5	Courteous
5	Sincerity
4	Aggressive
4	Creative
3	Achievement
3	Empathy
2	Risk taker

TABLE 5
TRAITS SELECTED BY PRINCIPALS
RANKED IN ORDER OF SELECTION

Number	Trait
22	Decision-making
20	Alertness to problems
18	Communication
18	Integrity
16	Adaptable
14	Dependable
14	Resourceful
13	Emotional control
13	Empathy
11	Sincerity
10	Cooperative
9	Creative
9	Enthusiasm
9	Progressive
7	Achievement
4	Loyalty
2	Courteous
1	Aggressive
1	Friendly

TABLE 6

TRAITS SELECTED BY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS
RANKED IN ORDER OF SELECTION

Number	Trait
15	Decision-making
14	Alertness to problems
14	Communication skills
14	Cooperative
12	Dependable
12	Integrity
11	Emotional control
11	Loyalty
10	Adaptable
9	Courteous
8	Enthusiasm
8	Progressive
8	Sincerity
7	Resourceful
4	Achievement Drive
3	Empathy
2	Aggressive
2	Creative

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to identify the leadership traits of an effective school superintendent as seen by teachers, principals, and school board members. If we are to cope with the problems facing education, it is necessary to accurately determine how to identify individuals who have the potential of being effective leaders in our school districts.

The objectives to be achieved in the study include the presentation and analysis of the information obtained from the questionnaires sent to teachers, principals, and school board members.

The following activities were carried out in the development of this study.

- (1) An examination was made of available literature on the topic of leadership.
- (2) Personal interviews were conducted.
- (3) A questionnaire was designed.
- (4) A selection was made of those to receive the questionnaire.
- (5) Following an analysis of the completed and returned questionnaire, conclusions were made by the writer and recommendations were then made.

CONCLUSION

A great deal of research has been completed in the area of leadership in general as shown by the survey of related literature. This is especially true in the fields of business and industrial psychology. There is a need for more research in the area of educational research, especially the leadership responsibility of a public school superintendent.

The questionnaire return showed there were some definite areas of agreement in the selection of leadership traits of an effective school superintendent. These areas were: communication skills, alertness to problems and decision making skills. The areas of greatest disagreement were: cooperativeness, courtesy, empathy, and loyalty.

Two additional leadership traits were added to the list by the participants; they were risk taking and friendly.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings in this study and the reading of related literature, the following recommendations are presented.

1. An individual who is thinking about applying for a position as a school superintendent should study the results of the questionnaire returns. The prospective superintendent should realize what leadership qualities teachers, principals, and school board members are

looking for in a school superintendent.

2. The information gained in this study may be helpful in the selection and training of future school administrators.

3. The study showed there is a need for an in depth study of leadership traits of an effective educational leader.

4. The study showed there is a need for further research on what is actually an effective superintendent.

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APPENDIX

This questionnaire is being sent to a number of classroom teachers, school administrators, and school board members. Would you please take a few minutes to fill out the form and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed?

Thank you.

Margaret Corkle

The following leadership traits and skills have been identified as needed to be an effective school superintendent. Please check the ten you feel are the most important traits or skills. You may add to the list if you wish.

- ☐ achievement drive
- ☐ adaptable
- ☐ aggressive
- ☐ alertness to problems
- ☐ communication skills
- ☐ cooperative
- ☐ courteous
- ☐ creative
- ☐ decision-making skills
- ☐ dependable
- ☐ emotional control
- ☐ empathy
- ☐ enthusiasm
- ☐ integrity
- ☐ loyalty
- ☐ progressive
- ☐ resourceful
- ☐ sincerity

☐ _____
☐ _____

This questionnaire was filled out by a

☐ Teacher ☐ Administrator ☐ School Board Member